

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Qualification Recognition Review on Master of Social Science in Social Work

THE FINAL REPORT BY THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

Executive Summary

The on-campus visit for the qualification recognition review of the Master of Social Science Programme in Social Work (Full-time and Part-time) offered by the Chinese University of Hong Kong was conducted on 1-2 February 2024. The Assessment Team appointed by Social Workers Registration Board reviewed the documentation submitted prior to the visit and met with various stakeholders of the Programme to support the following conclusion and recommendations. Taking into consideration the data gathered from the submission documents, findings from the on-campus visit, views of the Board's Committee on Qualification Recognition, and the positive response made by the Chinese University of Hong Kong to the Interim Report, the Assessment Team prepared this Final Report for the approval of the Board.

The Assessment Team is of the view that the Master of Social Science Programme in Social Work (Full-time and Part-time) meets the standards and requirements of Social Workers Registration Board in its *Principles, Criteria and Standards for Recognizing Qualifications in Social Work for Registration of Registered Social Workers* (7th edition). The Assessment Team is very satisfied with the various aspects of the Programme and recommends that the Programme (Full-time and Part-time) be recognised for a period of eight years from AY2024/25 to AY2031/32. The Assessment Team is aware that eight years is the maximum continued period of recognition awarded to a programme. In the light of the rapidly evolving challenges and opportunities of social work practice in Hong Kong, and with a view to facilitating the Chinese University of Hong Kong's continuous improvement on the Programme over the recommended period of recognition, the Assessment Team has made four suggestions for enhancement in addition to the five commendations given to the Full-time Programme and six commendations to the Part-time Programme based on their excellence.

Commendations

The commendations are:

Commendation 1

The Assessment Team commends the Programme for having nurtured students and graduates of very high calibre with good leadership skills. The Programme also enables students to benefit both intellectually and in the practical dimension with special emphases on students' professional attitude and upkeep of social work values which are deemed essential for social work practitioners.

Commendation 2

The Assessment Team commends the Programme teaching team for their innovative

teaching and learning strategies, particularly in leveraging the purposeful design of assignment and assessment tasks to stimulate students' creativity, teamwork and empathy during the course of study.

Commendation 3

The Assessment Team commends the Department of Social Work for having forged a strong strategic partnership with employers and placement agencies of the Programme. These stakeholder groups are the champion of the Programme and are a tremendous source of strength in connecting the Programme with the practice partners in the field.

Commendation 4

The Assessment Team commends the Department of Social Work for enthusiastically providing financial support to alleviate students' financial burdens while attending field placements, both local and overseas. Such financial commitment is made in the form of the Placement Travel Subsidy Scheme for local placements and subsidies for overseas placements to impact favourably on students' motivation, engagement and persistence, especially for the financially disadvantaged students.

Commendation 5

The Assessment Team commends the Programme for the University's investments in technology infrastructure to reinvent digitalised education. In addition to a wealth of library databases, students are readily accessible to various digital learning tools and facilities that help enhance creativity, innovativeness, collaboration and communication skills which are competencies required of the new generation of social workers.

Commendation 6 (Applicable to the Part-time Programme only)

The Assessment Team commends the Department of Social Work and the University for their support to students of the Part-time Programme. Versatile study space such as the Learning Garden is specifically zoned and open 24 hours a day to support learning activities. The Department also provides flexible study areas around-the-clock to accommodate the work schedule and learning needs of the part-time students of the Programme.

Suggestions for Enhancement

However appreciative the Assessment Team is of the Programme, to ensure it continues to thrive in the next period of recognition with challenges brought about by the changing sociocultural environment, the Assessment Team makes the following suggestions which focus on programme improvement:

Suggestion for Enhancement 1

Review the course outlines:

- to ensure the reading lists are structured, focused, updated and contextualized to engage and encourage students to realistic goals;

- to ensure, where applicable, that any quoted procedural guidelines and regulations from the government are up-to-date;
- to embed in the curriculum, where appropriate, contents of ethnic minorities and the equity-deserving groups, in addition to how knowledge of the Chinese Mainland can be integrated with global perspectives; and
- to ensure students are kept abreast of the ethical standards for digitalisation in social work practice by referencing relevant standards such as *NASW, ASWB, CSWE & CSWA standards for technology in social work practice*.

Suggestion for Enhancement 2

Review the *Manual for Field Education for the Master of Social Work Programme in Social Work (Full-time and Part-time)* to ensure the responsibilities of placement students are clearly documented. Develop clear guidelines and procedures for students withdrawing from, dropping and re-taking the field instruction courses. Develop detailed grade descriptors for the B and C grades.

Suggestion for Enhancement 3

Review the staff establishment of the Department for a better balance of the professorial rank and teaching-track faculty. As far as possible, the teaching team should comprise professorial rank with local practice experience and global perspectives.

Suggestion for Enhancement 4

In the light of the future strategic development in areas of interprofessional collaboration and digital transformation, review the composition of the Advisory Committee of the Department. Consider expanding the membership to include non-social work members so that the Department can draw on the diverse experience and background of the incoming members to strengthen interprofessional collaborative and digitalised teaching and learning.

THE FINAL DECISION OF THE BOARD

The Board has resolved to accept the recommendations of the Assessment Team to recognise the qualification for a period of 8 years from 2024/25 to 2031/32 academic year with 5 commendations on MSSSW full-time programme, 6 commendations on MSSSW part-time programme and 4 suggestions for enhancement for full-time and part-time programmes.